

**Application Number: F/YR13/0001/F
Minor
Parish/Ward: March Town Council
Date Received: 2 January 2013
Expiry Date: 27 February 2013
Applicant: Mr Bernard Keane**

**Proposal: Works involving piling and capping to reinforce river bank
Location: Land South Of March Health Centre, West End, March**

Site Area/Density: 0.011 ha

Reason before Committee: The proposal is before the Planning Committee as the applicant is a member of the Planning Committee

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for works involving piling and capping to reinforce the river bank at land south of March Health Centre, west End, March. The site lies within the March Conservation Area.

The application is to be assessed in line with Policies E3 and E8 of the Local Plan and Policy CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy together with the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies support new development which contributes to the sustainability of that settlement and does not harm the character of the area.

Key issues relate to:

- History of the site
- Policy assessment
- Character of area
- Design
- Impact on trees and the riverbank
- Impact on the watercourse.

The development proposed is on the banks of the River Nene in the March Conservation Area. The site has previously been used to launch canoes from by the Scouts and Girl Guides, but it is understood that this use ceased around 2004/2005.

The works are required to reinforce this area of the river bank. The Biodiversity report and Arboricultural report both indicate that the site is proposed for new moorings, however, the application form and description make no reference to this and, therefore, this application will be determined on the proposal to pile and cap the river bank only.

The main issues to consider relate to the character of the area and the resultant impact of the development on trees along the riverbank frontage and the potential impact of the development on the watercourse and character of the area in general.

The recommendation is to approve the application as it is not considered to adversely affect the character or nature of the area.

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|------------------|---|---|---------|-----------------|
| 2.1 | F/YR12/0736/TRCA | Felling of various Elder Trees, 1 Elm Tree and 1 Ash Tree, and works to 1 Oak Tree and 1 Weeping Willow Tree within a Conservation Area | 1 | Granted | 29 October 2012 |
| | F/YR10/0920/TRCA | Works to various trees within a Conservation Area | a | Granted | 5 January 2011 |
| | F/YR07/1323/TRCA | Works to various trees within a Conservation Area | a | Granted | 18 January 2008 |
| | F/95/0655/F | Use of land for the stationing of no. metal container for storage of equipment | 1 | Refused | 17 July 1996 |

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

3.2 Draft Fenland Core Strategy:

CS14: Delivering High Quality Environments

3.3 Fenland District Wide Local Plan:

E3: Retention of existing trees, hedgerows and landscape features

E8: Landscape and amenity protection

4. CONSULTATIONS

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|--|
| 4.1 | Parish/Town Council: | Recommend approval. |
| 4.2 | Conservation Officer (FDC) | No objection |
| 4.3 | Arboricultural Officer (FDC): | No objection - Satisfied with Arboricultural method statement provided in the application. |
| 4.4 | CCC Archaeology | No objection |
| 4.5 | Middle Level Commissioners: | Works 'in principle' have been agreed but this is subject to a separate application for consent made to MLC. |

- 4.6 **Environment Agency** No objection
- 4.7 **Local Residents:** No comments received

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The application site lies within the conservation area of March and consists of a river bank located along West End fronting the river Nene and adjoining the West End highway. Access to the site can be gained either from Marylebone Road/West End to the north or from West End Park to the south.

6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 History of the site

The site has previously been used to launch canoes from, but it is understood that no activity of this nature has taken place since approximately 2004/2005. Previous planning applications have sought approval for the removal and maintenance of trees within the site.

6.2 Policy assessment

Policies E3 and E8 of the current Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 are relevant to this application together with Policy CS14 contained within the emerging Core Strategy.

Policy E3 seeks to retain existing trees, hedgerows and other landscape features as part of new development proposals. Policy E8 again seeks to ensure these features are retained but goes on to ensure, that the design is compatible with their surroundings in terms of townscape/landscape character, scale and materials.

Policy CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy seeks to ensure that high quality environments are delivered and protected throughout the district. It sets out criteria including making a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, requiring development to retain natural features of the site and compliments and enhances the quality of riverside settings.

The NPPF seeks to deliver sustainable development that will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and respond to local character whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

6.3 Character of Area

The site is characterised by a mixture of shrub, trees and grasses which extends to the east and west along the extent of the river bank. No structures exist on the site save for the perimeter fencing restricting access from West End highway. Along the riverbank to the west and east is a mixture of natural river bank and moorings. Some evidence of previous reinforcing works to the banks can be seen on both sides of the riverbank to the east and west of the application site.

6.4 Design

The proposal is for steel sheet piling and capping for the purposes of reinforcing a section of the riverbank. Steel sheeting will extend along the face of the bank across the length of the site approximately 40m. It is anticipated that approximately 0.9m of the sheeting and capping will sit above the average water

line and, therefore, will be visible. The applicant has advised that the colour of the sheeting is to be either a black or grey.

Evidence of similar works can be seen approximately 50m to the west of the site on the opposite side of the bank whereby the face of the steel sheet can be seen approximately 0.6m to 0.8m above water level.

Subject to confirmation of the finished surface of the piling and capping, the design is considered to be reasonably discreet whilst being able to provide a functional role in reinforcing the riverbank. It is considered, therefore, that the development will not adversely affect the character of the area.

6.5 Impact on trees and riverbank

The works are not anticipated to affect any nearby trees or vegetation growing on or near to the riverbank. The Arboricultural report submitted has been approved by the Council's Arboricultural Officer. In addition a Biodiversity report has been submitted as part of the application and was carried out by Middle Level Commissioner's Environmental Officer. The report identifies the wildlife and biodiversity interests of the site and does not identify any potential issues arising from the development and goes further to provide guidelines as to when works should be carried out in order to protect breeding birds.

6.6 Impact on the watercourse

The Environment Agency is satisfied with additional information provided by the applicant regarding the protection of the watercourse and, therefore, has no objections.

They provide advice regarding pollution control which can be dealt with in the informative section.

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The impact of the proposal is deemed to be discreet when considered with the landscape of the site. The introduction of steel sheeting to the edge of the river may be considered to be alien in comparison to the natural boundary currently found, however, it is important to consider its function which is to reinforce the riverbank to prevent subsidence. This functional aspect, balanced with its limited visual impact accords with the main thrust of the NPPF which states that planning permission ought to be granted where there are no significant adverse impacts.

Therefore, and in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF and with Policies E3, E8 of the Local Plan and CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy this proposal is recommended for approval.

8. **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant

- 1. The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**

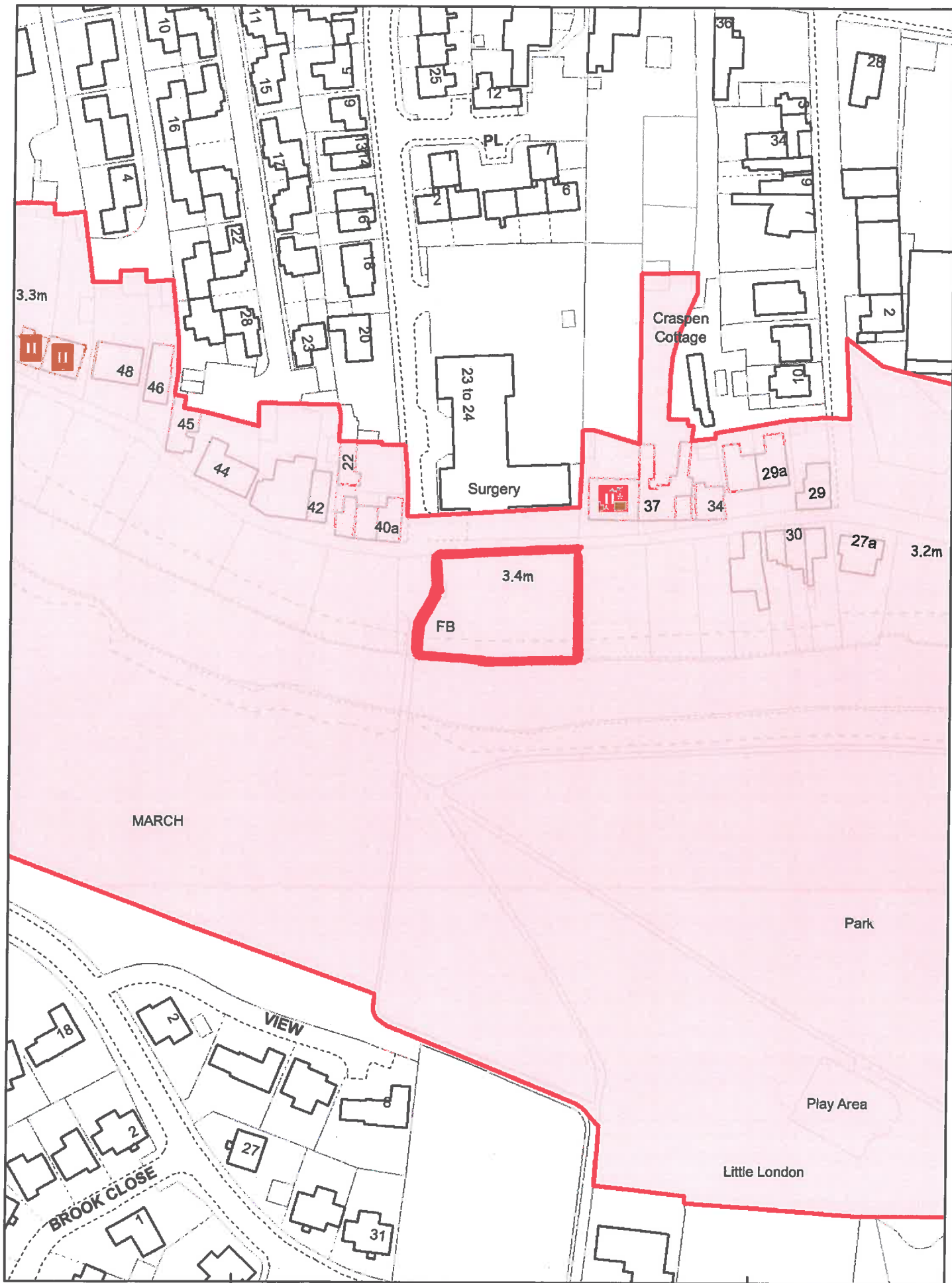
Reason - To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and

Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2. Prior to the commencement of any works or storage of materials on the site all trees shall be protected in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012. Moreover measures for protection in accordance with that standard shall be implemented and shall be maintained to the Local Planning Authority's reasonable satisfaction until the completion of the development for Building Regulations purposes.**

Reason - To ensure that retained trees are adequately protected.

- 3. Approved Plans**



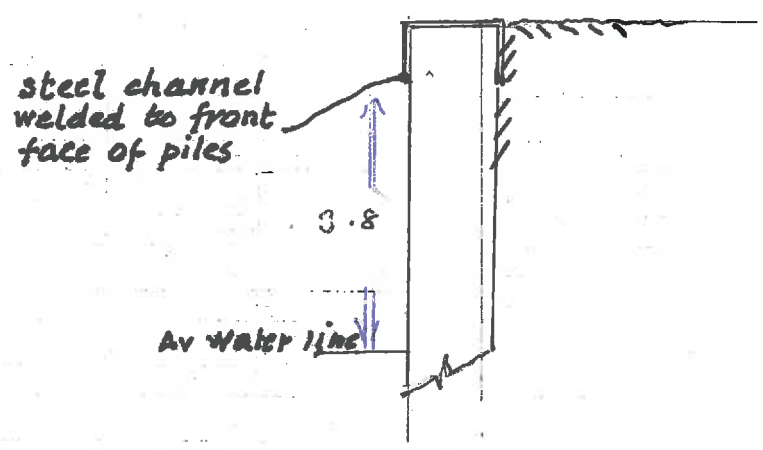
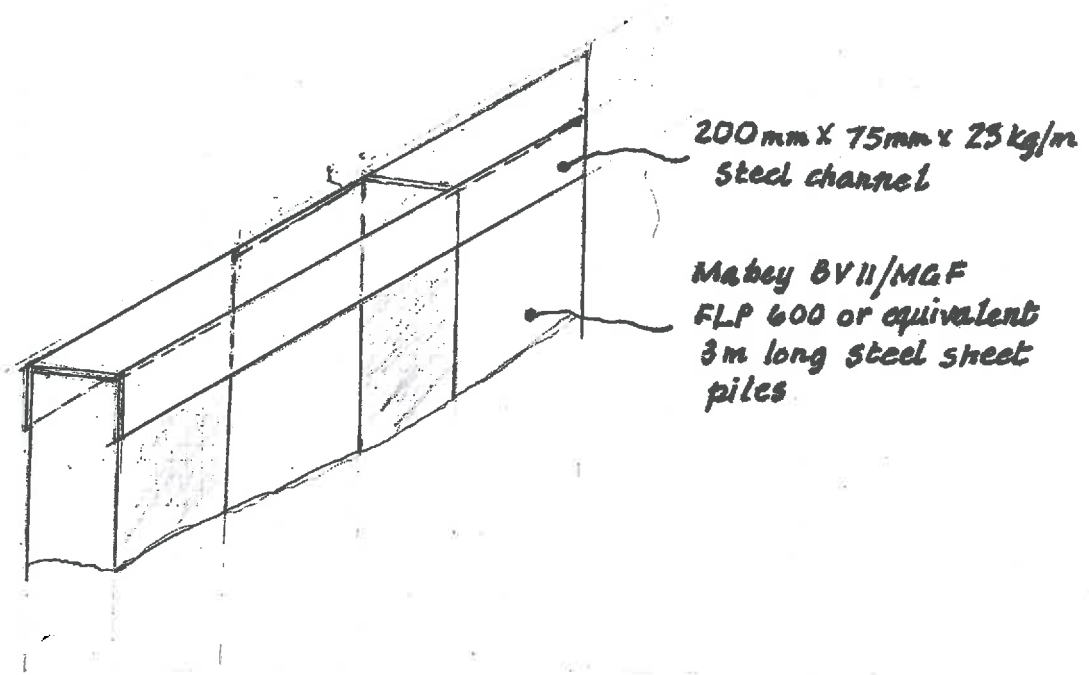
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SKETCH PLAN SHOWING
 PILING
 at
 WEST END, MARCH
 for
 MIDDLE LEVEL WATERMENS CLUB